

SCNP 2008 Commitment Survey FAQ

Q: When will the Commitment Survey be available?

A: The Survey will be posted on January 15, 2008 and will remain open through February 15, 2008.

Q: Will I still log into the same SCNP page to complete the Commitment Survey?

A: Yes, you will still use the same Login ID and Password to login at the SCNP page you always have at <http://scnweb.doe.state.in.us/Login.asp>.

Q: What happens if I didn't get the chance to attend one of the Commitment Survey Workshops?

A: There will be an opportunity to review an on-line tutorial prior to filling out the Survey. Additionally, the Survey will be open for one month. During the four week period the Survey is open (January 15, 2008-February 15, 2008), you will be able to edit the Survey, review and finalize your choices. John Moreland, Food Distribution Program Consultant, will be available to help answer any questions you may have. He may be reached by calling (317) 232-0850 or by e-mail at jmorelan@doe.state.in.us.

Q: Will I still be able to view my Entitlement balance, invoices and place delivery orders on-line like before?

A: Yes, essentially not much has changed from last year. You will still be able to view your Entitlement balance, inventory balance, invoice payments and place delivery orders with the State contracted warehouses. The one main difference is that, early in the year (January 15, 2008 - February 15, 2008), you will be asked to spend your Entitlement on end products (boxed fruit, vegetables, cheeses, and meats), and, if desired, raw products (pounds) to be diverted for processing purposes. By spending your entitlement in this new way, you will have a better opportunity to spend most, if not all of your Entitlement. Additionally, you will be requesting products that you want and not the ones the State Agency has selected for you.

Q: Will there still be allocations posted?

A: Yes, allocations will be posted when the specific end products you requested for delivery in a given month arrive at the State contracted warehouse. Each allocation that is posted will carry an associated Expiration Date and Close Date. The Expiration Date is the last date to have commodities delivered prior to accruing additional storage charges. Additional storage charges will be deducted from a Local Education Agency's (LEA's) lunch reimbursements. The Close Date will be set at least four months out from the Allocation Date. This is the last date to have commodities ordered prior to the commodities being removed from the LEA's inventory by the State Agency and made available on the Surplus Page to other LEA's at no charge to their Entitlement.

Q: Will I still need to follow a bi-weekly allocation schedule?

A: No, you will no longer have to follow an allocation schedule, wait to see what is offered, edit out your unwanted commodities, and perhaps get caught with some product you didn't want or need. When completing the Commitment Survey, you will be choosing the commodities for the specific month(s) you want a product placed into your inventory. After the Survey closes, if the results indicate there is enough interest in an end product and the USDA purchases it, you will receive only the commodities you want. Once the specific truck arrives at the State contracted warehouse with your requested amounts of commodities onboard, those commodity amounts will be electronically allocated to your inventory. Throughout the year, allocations will be created as end products entered on the Survey arrive at the warehouse. At that time an e-mail notification will be sent to you as a reminder to check your inventory. Allocations will be created and messages will be sent in accordance with the specific month(s) you indicated on the Survey. Once your commodities are in your inventory, you will then be able to place delivery orders in the usual way. By clicking the following link, you can review the instructions on placing an order for delivery.

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/food/distribution/cnporderforminstructions.html>

Q: How will I know if and when I receive my commodities?

A: When your requested end product commodities arrive at the State contracted warehouse distributor, you will receive an e-mail message alerting you that there are new commodities in your inventory. All you need to do at that point is review your inventory and place a delivery order as you always have by selecting the “Orders” tab on your Recipient Agency Summary Page. If you have chosen to divert raw products to a processor, those processed commodities will be delivered from your specific distributor and not necessarily the State contracted warehouses. You will need to know which distributors will be delivering your processed products. Additional e-mail messages will be sent to inform you when the Survey opens, closes, and when other important information needs to be disseminated. It is very important to keep your e-mail address current.

Q: What happens if I do not complete the Commitment Survey?

A: If you do not complete the Survey by the time it closes, you will not be able to receive commodities for the upcoming school year. However, you will be able to purchase Surplus commodities, receive Bonus commodities, or participate in a fair share allocation, if and when they become available.

Q: Since we will be choosing the specific commodities we want placed into our inventory and not editing out the ones we do not want, what will be the availability of Surplus commodities?

A: Surplus commodities may be somewhat limited since you will not be rejecting unwanted products. Some Surplus commodities may be available once the Survey closes and the State Agency balances requests into truckload amounts. If the total amount was less than a full truckload, the State Agency may choose to absorb the remaining balance that makes up a full truckload and offer those commodities on the Surplus Page. Additionally, there will be Surplus commodities created when a Close Date is implemented. The Close Date will be set at least four months from the Allocation Date. It is the last date to have commodities ordered prior to the commodities being removed from the LEA’s inventory by the State Agency and made available to other LEA’s as surplus inventory without a charge to their Entitlement. Additionally, Surplus commodities may be created if the USDA provides Bonus commodities to the States. Bonus commodities do not carry an Entitlement charge.

Q: Is my school corporation required to divert raw commodities to a processor?

A: No, a school corporation is not required to divert raw commodities to a processor. Raw products are the commodities sent to a processor in pound amounts. The decision to divert to a processor is optional. You may choose to spend your Entitlement on End products only. End products are the boxed commodities sent to the State contracted warehouse. However, if you decide to divert raw commodities to a processor, you must follow the required procurement procedures. To review the procurement regulations and some helpful information that will provide some guidance, you may click the following link: <http://www.doe.state.in.us/food/procurement.html>

Q: If I choose to divert raw commodities to a processor, will I still need to fax or e-mail to the State Agency the amount of raw products in pounds I wish to divert?

A: No, there will no longer be a need to send that information by fax or e-mail. The computer will capture your information when you enter on the Survey the pound amounts of raw products you want diverted and pick the appropriate processor at the same time.

Q: Can we still meet as a group or Co-op to decide the amounts of raw commodities we want diverted to a processor?

A: Yes, you may still meet as a group or Co-op as before. The only difference is you will be entering on your own the amounts of raw commodities you want diverted instead of as a group.

- Q: On the Commitment Survey will I have the option of choosing the processor(s) where I want to divert my raw product(s) for processing, will I still need to go through the procurement process as before?
- A: Yes, as in the past, when you request raw products to be diverted for processing you must follow the prescribed procurement regulations regarding processors as well as your choice of distributors. To review the procurement regulations and some helpful information that will provide some guidance, you may click the following link:
<http://www.doe.state.in.us/food/procurement.html>
- Q: Will we need to include the amounts of pounds of cheese we want diverted to the pizza processors?
- A: Yes, this will be a change from past years. When you complete the Survey, you will be asked to enter the number of pounds of cheese you want diverted to a pizza processor. You will enter these pound amounts just like you will all your other processing requests.
- Q: If I divert raw products to a processor, will I be excluded from receiving boxed, end products delivered to my State warehouse distributor like in past years?
- A: No, with the new Commitment Survey you will be able to request both raw products and end products. This change should provide you an opportunity to spend more of your Entitlement.
- Q: When it comes time to complete the Commitment Survey, what happens if I anticipate having leftover pounds of raw commodities at the end of the school year?
- A: Prior to filling out the Survey, should you believe you will have unused pounds of raw commodities at a processor, you should anticipate the product roll over amounts for use into the next school year and take that into consideration when making diversion requests by perhaps not requesting as many pounds on the Survey. Carryover pounds need to be used up early in the next school year.
- Q: What happens if I don't receive all of the end products commodities I requested on the Survey?
- A: After the Commitment Survey closes, the State Agency will have to balance commodity product requests to equal full truckloads (e.g. 912 cases of green beans and/or 42,000 lbs. of beef) as required by the USDA. If the total demand for a product is substantially less than a full truckload, State Agency may have to cancel the product all together. In this case we would take the product off your Survey and refund your Entitlement. If the total amount was slightly more or less than a full truckload we may change a few LEA's request to match a truckload or the State Agency may choose to absorb the remaining balance that makes up a full truckload and offer those commodities on the Surplus Page. Therefore it is possible you may not receive the exact items or quantities you requested. At times, an end product may not be available for various reasons (spoilage, damage, or cancellations). If a downward adjustment is made, you will have your Entitlement returned. You may then have the opportunity to spend it on Surplus items, a fair share allocation, or by other means whenever possible.
- Q: May I spend all of my Entitlement on the higher cost, higher protein commodities such as beef, cheese, chicken and turkey products?
- A: No, there will be an Entitlement cap for spending in the beef, cheese, chicken and turkey categories. If all LEAs were allowed to spend their total Entitlement in just these four product categories, there would not be enough of these products available to fill all the requests, nor would there be enough Entitlement left to spend on any other products. It is important to note, the States do not receive unlimited quantities of these products. Therefore, your spending limit can be no more than 20% of your total Entitlement for beef products, 20% for cheese products, 20% for chicken products and 15% for turkey products. If you were to spend the maximum allowed in these four categories, you will have spent 75% of your total Entitlement which would leave you with 25% of your Entitlement balance remaining to spend on other products. These percentage spending caps were established to closely correspond with the amount of Entitlement that is spent on these four product categories Statewide and Nationwide. After the Survey is closed and the State Agency balances the commodity requests, adjustments may be made and additional Surveys could be opened.

Q: What happens if I do not spend all of my Entitlement by the end of the school year?

A: The Commitment Survey is intended to allow you to spend all of your Entitlement up front. However, if you happen to have leftover Entitlement a percentage will roll over into the next year provided the State Agency has a remaining Entitlement balance.

Q: What happens if I run out of Entitlement before the year has ended?

A: Once you run out of Entitlement, you will be finished receiving commodities for the year. However, the State Agency will allow you to go over your Entitlement balance by 110% to ensure LEAs receive as close to 100% of their Entitlement as possible. It is important to remember the State Agency only provides for about 17% of a LEA's food for the year. You should view Food Distribution as a supplement to help off-set food costs and not as the sole provider of your food for the entire year. Entitlement not spent translates to the amount of real dollars you would have to spend out of your budget to buy food on the open market. Remember that there will be some Surplus commodities that will be marked as "No Charge" and "Bonus". These commodities do not carry an Entitlement charge and may still be purchased even if your Entitlement balance is zero.

Q: At the Commitment Survey workshops that were held in October, it was mentioned that we have the option of spending some of our Entitlement on the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Produce Program. Can you explain how this program works?

A: Indiana's Statewide participation in the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Produce Program has been postponed for 2008-2009 school year. A new ordering system that the DoD had scheduled to be in place has not yet been implemented. The State Agency wants to be confident that the DoD program will run smoothly prior to providing access to all LEAs and before they dedicate some of their Entitlement. Statewide participation in the DoD program will be addressed in the future.